

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 9, 16-35, 37, 38, and 40 remain in this application.

Claims 1-8, 10-15, 36 and 39 have been canceled without prejudice.

The Rejections Under 35 USC § 112

The examiner rejected claims 1-26 and 36 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim subject matter which applicants regard as the invention. In particular, the examiner has objected to the use of the word "virtually" in claims 1, 13 and 36. The examiner has indicated that claims 9 and 16-26 are allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 USC § 112 and to include all of the limitations of the base and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claims 9 and 16-26 accordingly.

The Rejections Under 35 USC § 102

The examiner rejected claim 36 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by both U.S. Patent No. 5,409,231 to Kueng, and U.S. Patent No. 5,503,395 to Cook. Claim 36 has been canceled without prejudice.

The examiner rejected claim 39 under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,792,015 to Hoyt. Claim 39 has been canceled without prejudice.

The Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

The examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, and 14 under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over Kueng in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,725,438 to Dennesen. Claims 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, and 14 have been canceled without prejudice.

The examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5-8, 10, 11 and 14 under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over Cook in view of Dennesen. Claims 1, 3, 5-8, 10, 11 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice.

The examiner rejected claims 12, 13 and 15 under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over Kueng in view of Dennesen and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,443,852 to Kim. Claims 12, 13 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice.

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Reply to Office Action of March 18, 2004

The examiner rejected claims 12, 13 and 15 under 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over Cook in view of Dennesen and further in view of Kim. Claims 12, 13 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice.

The examiner has acknowledged that claims 27-35, 37, and 38 are directed to allowable subject matter.

The examiner has objected to claim 40 as depending on rejected claim 39, but has indicated that claim 40 is allowable if claim 40 were amended to become an independent claim including all of the limitations of claim 39; applicants have amended claim 40 accordingly.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted

THE LAW OFFICE OF
RICHARD S. ERBE

By: 

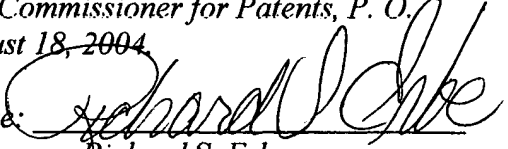
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on August 18, 2004.

Signature: 

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Date:

August 18, 2004